

REMARKS

Applicant believes that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance. In the event the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of the claims which could be clarified or satisfied by a telephonic discussion or interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned attorney.

DATED this 30TH day of APRIL 2002.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin B. Laurence
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 38,219



03528

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE IN THE CLAIMS:



Please amend claims 1-4, 6-8, 14-15, 17-18, 20, 23, and 25 as follows:

Please delete claims 5, 9-13, 16-24 and 26-32.

1. (Amended) A method for preparing mesophase pitch-based tape comprising
the step of:
extruding mesophase pitch through a slot-shaped die with an aspect ratio of
[10] 50 or more and drawing at a draw ratio greater than 5[.], wherein the shear rate in
the die is in the range 1000 to 5000s⁻¹.
2. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising[:]
the step
of stabilising the mesophase pitch-based tape.
3. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 [or 2] further comprising[:] the
step of oxidatively stabilising the mesophase pitch-based tape.
4. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein [the
planar molecules arrange mainly parallel to the major surface of] the mesophase pitch-based
tape has a major surface and planar molecules arranged mainly parallel to the major surface.
6. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the
mesophase pitch based tape is subjected to an elevated temperature.
7. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the
aspect ratio of the die is [20 or more, particularly preferably 30 or more, more preferably 40

or more, more especially preferably about 50 or more, even more especially preferably] 60 or more[, yet even more especially preferably 70 or more].

8. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 further comprising the step of carbonisation or graphitisation.

14. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim [9] 1 wherein [the die has an aspect ratio of about 50 and] the shear rate is in the range 1900 to 4000s^{-1}

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim [9] 1 wherein the [die has an aspect ratio of the die is about 80 and the shear rate is in the range 1700 to 4900s^{-1} .

17. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the draw ratio is greater than 10.

18. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the tape is of flat-layer transverse texture, said method further comprising[:] the step of laminating the tape with a material capable of controlling the thermomechanical properties, transport properties or resistance to oxidation of the tape.

20. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape obtainable from a method as defined in [any one of claims] claim 1 [to 19] comprising graphite basal planes parallel to the major surface of the tape.

23. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape as claimed in [any of claims] claim 20 [to 22] comprising a flat layer transverse texture.

25. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape as claimed in [any of claims] claim 20 [to 24] comprising an extended graphitic plane structure.